

back the balance of the hard-working jobs that the steel industry is losing.

#### CONGRATULATIONS TO DAN AND PAIGE PITTS ON THEIR MARRIAGE

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, this past weekend my son, Dan, was married to Paige Overton of Knoxville, Tennessee. So today I would like to talk to them.

Dan and Paige, what a magnificent wedding. We love you and are so happy for you. Never forget what the pastor shared; that according to the scriptures, the institution of marriage and family was God's idea. That is why it is so right and good.

When you think about family, they are the people that God brings into your life. You do not choose your brother or sister, your parents or children. God gives them to you.

So, Paige, we are so delighted to welcome you into our family. You are a very special young lady. Dan and Paige, you waited and prayed for each other, and God has given you the desires of your heart. His very best. Congratulations.

We love you, we are proud of you, we are grateful for you, and we wish you a lifetime of happiness together. And have a great honeymoon.

#### HOW AMERICANS HAVE BENEFITED BY ELECTING REPUBLICANS TO CONGRESS

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, after 40 years of Democratic leadership, which brought higher taxes, increased spending, and enormous budget deficits, my liberal colleagues are labeling us as a do-nothing Congress. So, Mr. Speaker, as the 105th Congress draws to a close, I am proud to submit a progress report on how this Republican-led Congress has benefitted America.

By electing Republicans, Americans have benefitted from their first tax cut in 16 years. And now, for a second consecutive year, we will again provide significant tax relief. By electing Republicans to control Congress, Americans benefitted not only from the first balanced budget in over a generation, but a budget surplus on top of that. And with this surplus Republicans are helping save Social Security. By electing Republicans, Americans have benefitted from a truly needed and meaningful Patient Protection Act, legislation that will ensure Americans have accountable, accessible and affordable health care for themselves and their families.

Is it any wonder that Americans continue to elect and reelect Republicans to lead this body into the next century? Republicans remain committed

to a future that benefits the American people, a future that is pro-family, pro-business and pro-America; a commitment that this and future generations have a rendezvous with a brighter destiny.

#### COST OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS AND THE PRESCRIPTION DRUG FAIRNESS ACT

(Mr. FORD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Prescription Drug Fairness Act. Anyone in America who has older relatives or friends who are living on a fixed income and taking prescription drugs understand firsthand the devastating impact that the high cost of medication can have on the health and well-being of seniors.

As we all know, with age comes a greater susceptibility to health problems. As such, it is no surprise that, on average, Americans over the age of 65 spend three times as much of their income, over 20 percent, on health care than Americans under the age of 65. Three-quarters of Americans 65 and older take prescription drugs. On average, Americans take 2.4 prescription drugs at any one time.

One would think that since older Americans make up such a large segment of the market for prescription drugs that they would pay reasonable prices for their medication. Unfortunately, that is not the case. Due to cost shifting and the limited power of seniors, they get the short end of the stick compared to HMOs and other most-favored customers when it comes to the cost of drugs, which is why I rise in support of the Prescription Drug Fairness Act.

Thanks to the leadership of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. JIM TURNER) and the gentleman from Maine (Mr. TOM ALLEN) we now have legislation which is designed to help level the playing field by; one, providing Medicare beneficiaries with a drug benefit card that will entitle the holder to purchase drugs at reduced prices from participating pharmacies; and, two, allowing pharmacies to purchase drugs at the same lower price as the Federal Government.

As a public policymaker at the Federal level, I believe Congress has a responsibility to help protect seniors from the unreasonably high cost of prescription drugs. The Prescription Drug Fairness Act is designed to accomplish just that. I hope every one of my colleagues signs on and supports this legislation.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the provisions of clause 5, rule I, the Chair announces that he will postpone further proceedings today on each

motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 4 of rule XV.

Such rollcall votes, if postponed, will be taken after debate has concluded on all motions to suspend the rules, but not before 5 p.m. today.

#### FEDERAL EMPLOYEES HEALTH CARE PROTECTION ACT OF 1997

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the bill (H.R. 1836) to amend chapter 89 of title 5, United States Code, to improve administration of sanctions against unfit health care providers under the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendments:

Page 2, line 3, strike out "1997" and insert "1998".

Page 12, line 8, strike out "January 3, 1998" and insert "or before January 2, 1999".

Page 12, lines 13 and 14, strike out "January 3, 1998" and insert "or before January 2, 1999".

Page 12, line 18, strike out "January 3, 1998" and insert "or before January 2, 1999".

Page 13, line 13, strike out "January 3, 1998" and insert "or before January 2, 1999".

Page 13, line 19, strike out "January 3, 1998" and insert "or before January 2, 1999".

Page 14, lines 2 and 3, strike out "January 3, 1998" and insert "or before January 2, 1999".

Page 14, line 10, strike out "January 3, 1998" and insert "or before January 2, 1999".

Page 14, line 16, strike out "January 4, 1998" and insert "January 3, 1999 or such earlier date as established by the Office of Personnel management after consultation with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, as appropriate".

Page 14, line 24, strike out "January 3, 1998" and insert "or before January 2, 1999".

Page 15, line 13 after "Office" insert "of Personnel Management".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA).

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the bill, H.R. 1836, as amended by the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON), the chairman of the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, for introducing this very important bill. I also want to thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA), chairman of the Subcommittee on Civil Service, for his